

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DHHS again corrects misinformation about Veterans' Home

Lincoln – Once again, recent allegations about the Grand Island Veterans' Home are untrue, according to Kerry Winterer, CEO of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Winterer said statements recently made by Don Shuda, veterans' service officer with Hall County are wrong.

"I hesitate to repeat these outrageous statements, but once again I must set the record straight," he said. "Mr. Shuda recently stated that under the current administration of the Veterans' Home, there is a higher turnover rate and more grievances filed during any time he's seen in 27 ½ years."

In fact, Winterer said, only one employee grievance has been filed so far this year, with a total of 12 grievances filed in the nearly five years between 2009 and 2013, the current administrator's tenure. During the previous five years, from 2004 to 2008, 33 Veterans' Home employee grievances were filed, with 15 in 2005 alone.

Likewise, Winterer said, the employee turnover rate is not at an all-time high as stated by Mr. Shuda.

"Again, we looked at the last 10 years of data," he said. "Contrary to these statements, the employee turnover rate during this time has actually improved slightly under the leadership of the current administrator. The average annual turnover rate from 2004 to 2008 was 30.6 percent. While the rate for 2012 was higher, the average annual rate from 2009 to 2013 was 29.3 percent."

The highest turnover rate was 47.8 percent in 2008, before the current administrator was hired, and the lowest was 21.6 percent in 2010, during his tenure. The employee turnover rate for 2013, through August 1, is 30.1 percent.

Winterer said the 2011 staffing survey by the American Health Care Association reported that the turnover rate for all nursing facility employees that year was 45 percent. "There will always be employees who choose to leave employment with the Veterans' Home, as they do with other nursing homes or other professions. They leave for many different reasons, such as relocation or other job opportunities, and sometimes because their job performance has not met our standards," he said.

"I have to ask, what is the intent behind these false statements?" said Winterer.

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